MICE Protocol

One-on-One or 'Special' Time

Use This:

To increase positive interaction between the parent and child.

Goals

- The parent will understand how the style of his or her interactions with the child greatly affects the child's motivation to work for him or her
- The parent will establish a more positive interaction pattern with the child through regular One-on-One or 'Special' time

Materials

- ***Fear Thermometer*** and ***Fear Ladder*** (2 unrated copies, for anxiety/trauma), ***Feelings Thermometer*** (for depression) *(pp. 318, 320, 342)*
- ***One-on-One or 'Special' Time*** parent handout *(p. 389)*
- ***Checklist of Strategies (p. 391)***
- Pens and pencils
- MINDED video
- ***Weekly questionnaires*** and ***Monitoring sheet*** *(see pages 277-293)*
- ***Therapist Note Taking Sheet*** *(p. 276)*

> ***If time is tight:*** *Go over the handout on how to attend to and monitor the child's behaviour.*

Main steps	
☐ **Set an Agenda**	Remember to start by setting an agenda and reviewing any practice assignments.
☐ **Obtain Weekly Ratings**	If the main focus is traumatic stress or anxiety, use the 0 to 10 scale of the ***Fear Thermometer*** to obtain ***Fear Ladder*** ratings from both the child and his or her parent. If the main focus is depressed mood, use the ***Feelings Thermometer*** to take a rating. Review the ***Weekly questionnaires*** and ***Monitoring sheet*** in detail. Discuss any difficulties with monitoring, usefulness of monitoring, what is being monitored etc.
☐ **Discuss Attention**	Ask the parent whether he or she believes receiving attention from others can have an impact on someone's behaviour. Continue this line of discussion by asking the parent to think about how the quality of the attention we receive from others, even as adults, affects our desire to work with them.

☐	**ACTIVITY** ***Best Supervisor/Worst Supervisor***	Ask the parent to put aside thoughts about his or her child for a moment and instead concentrate on someone really awful for whom he or she has worked in the past. This person could be a supervisor, a team leader, a coach, or a teacher. Ask the parent to describe the characteristics or behaviour of that person that led to the parent's negative feelings about him or her. Draw a line down the centre of a blank page. At the top of the left-hand column, ask the parent to write "Worst Supervisor" (or teacher, coach, etc.) and to then list at least five characteristics of the worst person for whom he or she has worked. Ask the parent to be specific about the feelings he or she had toward this person. Then ask the parent to write "Best Supervisor" (or teacher, coach, etc.) at the top of the right-hand column and list at least five things about that person.
☐	**Debrief after Activity**	At the conclusion of the activity, ask the parent which one of these two people he or she would be more likely to work hard for and why. Discuss how our motivation to work hard for someone can be affected by how we feel about that person. Ask the parent which of the two columns is more relevant to the types of interactions that are going on now with his or her child. Ask if the parent can see how increasing the "best supervisor" qualities might help to motivate the child to be more cooperative and to meet parental expectations.
☐	**State Goal One: Improving Attention**	Begin by letting the parent know that parental attention is the most rewarding thing for a child. Explain that the first goal for this week is to find ways to use attention in a really specific way to help improve their child's behaviour. The parent will learn ways to make attention much more powerful and rewarding by following just a few special rules. Therefore you will be starting with one of the most powerful, flexible (and free!) tools that a parent has. Acknowledge that they are likely to be spending a great deal of time with their child anyway but that quite often that time is focused on getting things done (e.g., medication, hospital visits, getting them dressed). It can be helpful to spend time with them in a slightly different way and some people call this 'special time' and we will go on to discuss it and how it might be different to other time you spend together. Acknowledge that simply providing this special time and positive attention may not be sufficient to change the behavioural difficulties the parent currently has with his or her child, but indicate that this skill can make some of the other parenting skills work better.

☐	**State Goal Two: Build a Positive History**	Explain that the second goal of this module is to improve the interactions occurring between the parent and the child through the use of regular periods of this One-on-One/Special time. Building (or rebuilding) a history of these positive interactions is important for several reasons. First, it's good to have some positive time together to remind each other what the child is really like (refer to child's strengths) when you are not arguing. Second, we sometimes find that by focusing attention in this positive way, then demands for attention through negative behaviour can decrease. The parent can think about "banking" these positive exchanges now to help with the challenging times that may arise later (i.e., "cashing in" on the positive relationship). Building a positive history with the child is like building up a bank account, but instead of money it is a strong parent-child relationship that is building up.
☐	**Review *One-on-one or 'Special' Time* Handout**	Review the ***One-on-One or 'Special' Time*** handout, explain that the handout reviews the new methods of paying attention to child behaviours that you will be going over together today. Go over each of the points in detail, and make sure you answer questions along the way. If you haven't already sent the video, tell the parent/s that you will send a video after the session which helps to explain one-on-one/special time.
☐	**Check In**	Check in with the parent to see what they think about One-on-One/Special time. This will be helpful to ensure that the parent/s does not feel blamed or as though you are telling them that they are not spending enough time with their child.
☐	**Discuss How to Start**	If the One-on-One/Special time is set for a standard time each day (e.g., after school, after dinner), the parent should say to the child at that time "This is our One-on-One/Special time. What would you like to do together?" Indicate to the parent that the child should be able to choose the activity, within reason. Suggest that almost any activity is fine, so long as it does not involve watching television or playing video games. If the One-on-One/Special time is not scheduled for a particular time each day, the parent should simply approach the child while he or she is playing alone and ask to join in. Some children with epilepsy (and particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder symptoms) like to have routine. Parents usually have a good idea about whether it is best for their child to know that the one to one time will happen at a particular time each day or if that will cause the child anxiety. It can be helpful to set a timer if children like predictability or may have difficulty finishing the special time after ten minutes.

☐	**Emphasise How to Narrate**	Point out to the parent that the main way to interact involves narrating what he or she sees the child doing, to demonstrate to the child that the parent finds his or her play interesting. With younger children (under age 10), the parent's commentary should be especially exciting and action-oriented. For example: • Describe what the child is doing e.g. "you are drawing with the purple pen" • Describe how the child is looking e.g. "I can see that you are having fun with that game" • Describe where the child is e.g. "you are sitting on the floor playing with your toys" • Describe how the child is engaging in a desirable behaviour e.g. "you played really nicely all by yourself when mummy had to make a phone call" **Example script** *One way to understand how this works is to imagine that you are a sports commentator describing a game. Your description of the child's behaviour should be interesting, detailed, and generally a running, uncritical commentary on what you are watching happen. Use a tone of voice that is interested and excited, as this style of speaking can be highly rewarding to children* Tell the parent that the video helps to explain the narration aspect of One-on-One/Special time.
☐	**Manage Expectations**	Warn the parent that although this technique sounds easy, it usually requires quite a bit of practice. Assure the parent that people often make mistakes during One-on-One/Special time by giving too many instructions, asking too many questions, or not providing enough positive feedback or attention. Some parents find they don't know what to say during One-on-One/Special time. Remind the parent that this is a skill that will improve with practice, and they should not expect instant success. Also acknowledge that One-on-One/Special time will not miraculously cure all of the child's problems. However, the parent can expect the child to come to view the parent as a more rewarding person to be around. Many families report at least a slight improvement in their relationship with their child after only one week. Suggest to the parent that the One-on-One/Special time should become a part of their normal household routine for an indefinite period of time.

☐ **Deal with Concerns**	Provide the parent with time to discuss any of their concerns about or reactions to One-on-One/Special time. If the parent expresses concern that One-on-One/Special time will set up the expectation that the parent will always be unconditionally positive, there are several ways that such concerns can be addressed: • You can point out that many thousands of families have used these same techniques with their children, and you have not yet heard of this becoming a problem. • Also remind the parent that most people expect a certain amount of appreciation from their employers, spouse, and children. Explain that the child desires attention in much the same way the parent does. **Example script** *Few people like to continue making an effort at something if they feel like their work isn't being appreciated. Think of how many relationships break up because one partner thinks he or she is being "taken for granted." When people provide this reason for the break up of a relationship, they usually mean that they felt their contributions to the relationship were unappreciated.*
☐ **Address Time Management**	Some parents will indicate that they are just too busy to spend time playing with their child. Assure the parent that you appreciate that they have many demands on their time, but emphasise that tremendous gains can result from a small investment of 15 minutes each day. Remind them that this 15 minutes might soon result in getting back much more time in a few weeks, as they will be less occupied with responding to their child's negative behaviour throughout the day. Also remind the parent that at the beginning of treatment they agreed that addressing their child's concerns was a "high priority" for them. If necessary, discuss with the parent any factors that might have changed since that time and work with the parent to address and problem-solve the limitations on their time. Be careful not to shame or guilt-trip parents here. Problem solve with them in a supportive way. Parents of children with epilepsy often have huge demands on their time and you may need to problem solve with them to find time in the day – this may mean not doing some other tasks that are less of a priority in the moment. If finding the time is a barrier to change, do Problem Solving [Depression module].

☐	**ACTIVITY** ***Practise One-on-one or 'Special' Time***	After reviewing the steps involved in One-on-One/Special time, engage the parent in a role-play in which you act as the child **(adapt for telephone delivery)**. Set up a situation in which you are involved in a play activity and the parent joins in for One-on-One/Special time together. Pay close attention to the parent's use of narration, his or her use of comments rather than questions, instructions, or criticism, and his or her use of encouragement and praise. The role-play should last at least 5 minutes to give the parent a sufficient amount of experience with attending to the child in a nondirective manner.
☐	**Debrief after Activity**	After the role-play has been concluded, discuss the parent's thoughts about his or her performance. Provide the parent with specific feedback about his or her use of narration, avoidance of questions and instructions, and use of praise and encouragement. Make specific suggestions with respect to how the parent can improve his or her attending skills, and remind the parent that most parents find the attending skills much more difficult to use in practice than they thought they would. Practise again until the parent feels comfortable.
☐	**PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT** ***One-on-One or 'Special' Time***	Explain to the parent that during the coming week he or she is to practise One-on-One/Special time on a daily basis. Discuss with the parent how he or she plans to implement daily One-on-One/Special time at home during the coming week. Pick an activity that is likely to go well. You want the parent and child to experience success with this practice, so start with something the child can already do without difficulty or redirection if possible. Ask the parent to use the ***Monitoring sheet*** to indicate what he or she did during each day's One-on-One/Special time and how well it worked. The parent might also wish to note specific problems encountered with One-on-One/Special time so that these concerns can be addressed with you later.
☐	**Checklist of Strategies**	Remind the parent that throughout treatment you will be introducing, practicing and reviewing different strategies. The ***Checklist of Strategies*** can be helpful to keep track of what the strategies were used each week. In later sessions, when there are additional strategies, this checklist can also be helpful to understand how the strategies fit together and what should be used for what type of behaviour.
☐	**Send the materials for the next session**	Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the ***Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet*** and ***Checklist of Strategies*** which need to be completed for the next session. Confirm date and time of the next call.

☐ **Summarising**	Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.

Leave 'Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note with the parent by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to his or her child, or discussing an area of interest you have in common with the parent. Also, the parent might be feeling overwhelmed by the challenging tasks he or she is undertaking; it can sometimes be helpful to leave a few minutes at the end of the session for the parent to share concerns or the challenges he or she has faced with the child since the previous session. The end of each session should be used to praise the parent's efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

Share with Child (if possible)

At the end of the session, if the child is available, it can be helpful to brief him or her on the materials covered.

☐ **Review Concepts**	Explain to the child that this week his or her parent is going to be spending more time playing or spending time with the child on an activity that the child chooses. Ask the child if he or she has any questions about the new way that his or her parent will be interacting with him or her at home.
☐ **ACTIVITY** ***One-on-One or 'Special' Time with Child***	Provide the child with an activity or some toys that he or she finds enjoyable and ask him or her to play so that the parent can observe his or her activities. Ask the parent to announce to the child that he or she will play with the child for a while. While the parent and child are playing, pay close attention to the parent's use of narration, use of comments rather than questions or instructions, and use of encouragement and praise. The role-play should last at least 5 minutes to give the parent a sufficient amount of experience with attending to the child in a nondirective manner. After the role-play has been concluded, excuse the child from the room, and discuss the parent's thoughts about his or her performance. Give lots of praise for any success! Provide the parent with specific feedback about his or her use of the narration, avoidance of questions and instructions, and use of praise and encouragement. Make specific suggestions about how the parent can improve his or her attending skills, and provide support and reassurance.

Helpful Tips

- Some parents will indicate that One-on-One/Special time does not seem directed towards any of the problems they originally came to treatment to address. Remind the parent about the job supervisor example at the beginning of the session and reiterate the need for the parent to teach his or her children to respond to and enjoy their attention, which will later be used as a major strategy for behaviour change. This is really training for the child that helps him or her begin to enjoy and thus respond more to parental attention.

- When discussing choosing a time to play with the child each day be sure to adapt your instructions to the developmental age of the child. For example, if the child is 9 or older, the parent need not select a standard time each day to spend with the child, but may instead find a convenient time each day to join the child in whatever activity he or she is already enjoying.
- When teaching the parent to narrate his or her child's play, suggest that this running commentary works best with younger children, and the frequency of comments should be reduced for older children. The parent should exercise his or her judgement as to how much narration to employ with the child. The important point to convey to the parent is that he or she should be spending time with his or her child without criticising, directing, or controlling the child's behaviour. The parent should instead watch and appreciate what the child does.
- Remind the parent that during One-on-One/Special time there is virtually nothing that must be taught to the child that cannot be postponed for another time. Even if the child is not playing up to the standards expected by the parent, the parent should avoid taking charge of the child's play and trying to teach the child alternative ways of playing. It might seem like the child is not learning, but if the parent is attending properly, there is lots of really important learning going on.
- If two parents are working on this skill with their child, they can take turns playing with the child. If there are other siblings present in the home, one parent can take the siblings to another room for activities while the second has One-on-One/Special time with the child. After 5 to 10 minutes, the parents can switch roles, giving each partner a chance to practise with the child.
- If the child chooses a competitive game to play during One-on-One/Special time, the parent should allow the child to invent new rules to the game or even "cheat" without reprimanding the child during the playtime. The goal of the playtime is not to learn how to play games properly, but to practise giving attention to the child.

How's Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?
- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?